

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contacts:**

Kristin Hildebrand, Coalition Facilitator
Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention
Eau Claire City-County Health Department
715-839-2874
Kristin.Hildebrand@co.eau-claire.wi.us

Brian Schneider
Sergeant of Police
Eau Claire Police Department
715-839-4780 / 715-491-1011
Brian.Schneider@eauclairewi.gov

New Training Aims to Increase Compliance Check Rates

Eau Claire, WI – May 20, 2015 – Retailers play a key role in decreasing youth access to tobacco products and alcohol by routinely carrying out the law and not allowing youth under 18 to purchase tobacco products, or youth under 21 to purchase alcohol. Clerks at these establishments are the first line of defense in preventing youth access to these products.

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department conducts ongoing tobacco compliance checks through the Wisconsin Wins Program, in accordance with Wisconsin State Statute 134.66 and 254.92 that prohibit the sale of tobacco and nicotine products to anyone under age 18. WI Wins, a program of the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, provides training, media and community outreach, and education to help retailers avoid hefty fines for illegal sales. Training for tobacco retailers is required by statute, and free training is available at www.smokecheck.org. Alcohol compliance checks are conducted by the Health Department through the Reality Check 21 Program to determine if Eau Claire County liquor license holders are observing Wisconsin State Statute 125, which prohibits the sale of all alcohol products to anyone under the age of 21. All alcohol and tobacco compliance checks are done in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies throughout the County. There are 104 tobacco retailers and 246 alcohol license holders in Eau Claire County.

“We have found that employees typically ask for an ID; however, skills need to be improved to accurately check the IDs,” shared Kristin Hildebrand of the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention. In recent compliance checks, where a sale has been made to an underage buyer for tobacco or alcohol during a compliance check, the sale occurs after the ID is requested and date is presumably checked. Failing to see that the ID states the buyer is underage, the seller completes the illegal sale. To date in 2015, 10% of tobacco retailers and 33% of alcohol retailers checked have failed compliance checks. Both retail establishments and clerks who make illegal sales of tobacco and alcohol are subject to fines.

The Eau Claire Police Department is working with the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention at the Health Department, and is proud to announce a collaborative effort to provide ID Check Training for local retailers. The first training will take place in June, and will retrain Eau Claire clerks and retailers who have failed tobacco or alcohol compliance checks in 2015. Participants will learn how to read identification cards correctly, how to refuse an illegal sale and how they play a key role in the prevention of underage alcohol and tobacco use on our community.

The average age of first use of both tobacco and alcohol in Eau Claire County is 13. This is concerning because 80% of adults who are current tobacco users started before the age of 18. We also know that 67% of youth who begin to drink alcohol before age 15 eventually do other drugs. Preventing youth from having access to tobacco and alcohol will help reduce negative health consequences and the cost to our economy in the future. When kids have a hard time getting tobacco and alcohol, they use less. And the less tobacco and alcohol our kids use, the more Wisconsin wins.

